(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is also aware that the State has taken a big initiative in the matter and is committed to the development of child and women; and

(d) if so, the status of the above proposal to include the State in the above World Bank Project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (d) Eight States *viz.* Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have been selected for implementation of the proposed World Bank assisted ICDS-IV Project on the basis of a study *viz.* 'Mapping and Profile' of "Target" Districts-India ICDS Programme' and best practices experience of the State. The request received from the Government of Orissa for inclusion in the proposed Project was considered in the Ministry. However, it was not found possible to accede to the same. A suitable reply was accordingly sent to the State Government on 1st February, 2008.

Amendment of Anti-Dowry Act

1073. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to amend the Anti-dowry Act, so as to make it harsher;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is aware that the provision of this Act are being blatantly abused, as per several judgement of the various courts in this regard; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The National Commission for Women (NCW) which is mandated by lawamong other things, to review Constitutional and other legal provisions affecting women and to suggest amendment thereof, has recommended some amendments to the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and section 304B IPC (Dowry death). The recommendations are presently under examination in the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

(b) The main points of the recommendation made by NCW are shown in the enclosed statement. (*See* below).

(c) Government has no information that there is any large-scale misuse of the concerned laws. As per the data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs for the years 2004 to 2006, the number of cases registered and the number of cases declared false on account of mistake of fact or law was 21431 & 974, 179568 & 19013 and 11300 & 615 under section 304B IPC (dowry death), section 498A IPC (cruelty by husband or relative of husband) and the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, respectively.

(d) It is for the investigating and prosecuting authorities in the States to deal with any false complaint relating to dowry.

Statement

Main points of the recommendations made by NCW

The National Commission for Women has made the following main recommendations:—

(i) The words in connection with the marriage of said parties occurring in section 2 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 relating to the definition of dowry, may be deleted.

(ii) A penalty of imprisonment of not less than 3 years and fine of not less than Rs. 15,000/- may be introduced for the parents/relatives of the bride or bridegroom for non-maintenance of lists of presents under the Dowry Prohibition (Maintenance of Lists of Presents to the Bride and Bridegroom) Rules, 1985.

(iii) The penalty laid down in the said Act for giving dowry may be reduced to imprisonment of not less than one year and fine of not less than Rs. 15,000/- unless the person can prove that he was compelled to give dowry.

(iv) Amend section 6 of the said Act (dowry to be for the benefit of the wife or her heirs) in order to provide that in the event of the death of any woman, whether due to natural causes or otherwise, whether within 7 years or after 7 years of her marriage, any property to which she is entitled under the section will be transferred to her children or to her parents if she has no children, and not to her heirs.

(v) Empower the Service Provider or the Protection Officer functioning under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, under section 7 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, to lodge a complaint of commission of an offence.

(vi) The words 'soon before her death' occurring in sub-section (1) of section 304B IPC (Dowry death) may be replaced by the words 'anytime before her death' and any death occurring in the circumstances mentioned in the sub-section even after 7 years of marriage should be considered as dowry death. The minimum punishment laid down in sub-section (2) of section 304B IPC should be raised from 7 years to 10 years and death may be prescribed as the maximum penalty alternate to the existing penalty of imprisonment for life.

Death of girls due to pregnancy and early marriage

1074. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 1,000 girls continue to die every day in the country due to pregnancy related problems and early child marriage; and

(b) the steps Government has taken during the last three years to address the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) As per the information received from Ministry of Health, the latest survey report of Registrar General of India (RGI-SRS 2001—03) published in the year 2006, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) for India is 301 per 100,000 live births which translates into about 77,000 maternal deaths per year or in other words 211 maternal deaths per day.

(b) In order to bring a reduction in MMR, the Government of India is implementing the following key interventions all over the country which include: